



**SEIU DISTRICT 1199W/UNITED PROFESSIONALS FOR QUALITY HEALTH CARE**  
Service Employees International Union

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*UNITED PROFESSIONALS, LEADING THE WAY TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE*

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*Statement presented before Finance and Personnel Committee of the City of Milwaukee  
Common Council on October 23, 2006.*

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you regarding the Health Department Budget. I represent the Public Health Nurses through the Staff Nurses Council. The Public Health Nurses are a very dedicated and skilled professional group, addressing prevention and access to health care. But the number of PHN/s has decreased continuously over the years and yet...

- Infant mortality remains high
- Teen pregnancy and repeat teen pregnancy rates continue to be high
- Immunization rates are still below goals
- Racial disparity is as great as ever in health care settings

The Health Department answers this with grant funding, seeking to offset O&M funding. Though a great concept and certainly important in today's fiscal environment, it does not replace the generalist PHN, supported by O&M funding. As these grant funds become available, PHNs for the positions are drawn from the generalists to fill the positions, then the O&M position may be eliminated. Grant funding is tied to specific activities and outcomes and tends to limit who can be served and what services can be offered. (If your zip code is not in the grant area, you will not receive the services). With the continued decrease in generalist PHNs, it is not possible for those who remain to effectively target the issues above for the remainder of the City.

As an example of this, one could focus on the decrease in services to the NW side of the city with the relocation of PHNs out of the NW Health Center. This part of the City is currently experiencing more population growth, yet Information and referral services will suffer as staff will not be on site to address the concerns for the client/constituent when they come in to WIC or other programs still open. Home visit services would decrease because of increased travel time. I would ask you to consider the value of these services to the people you represent, either on a day-to-day basis or in the next outbreak. What is your commitment to the health of the City of Milwaukee?

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Thorsheim, President  
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Staff Nurses Council